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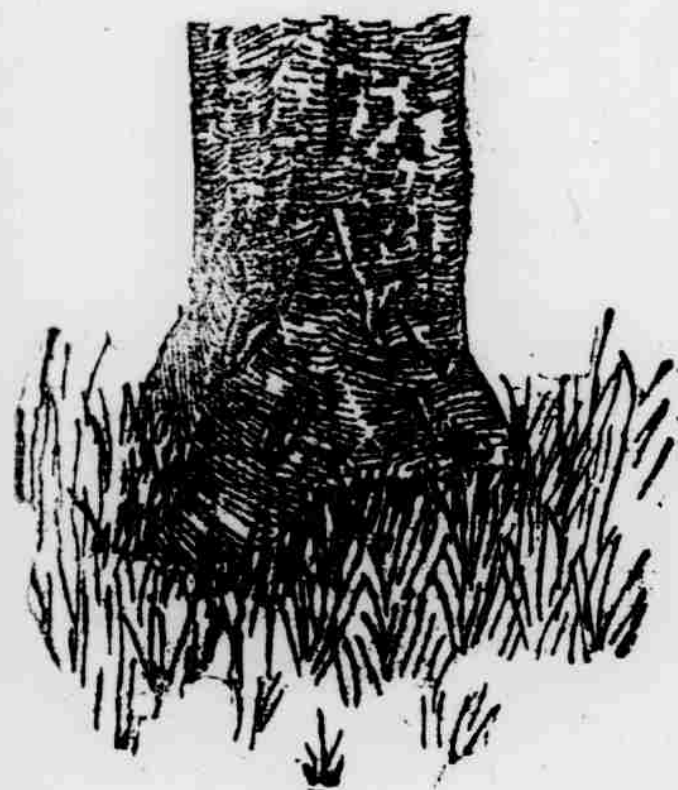
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## THE PLAGUE OF FIELD MICE.

By S. E. Piper.

The mouse which produced the plague in some of the Western States, a short time ago, proved to be the "black mouse," one of the numerous species of short tailed field or meadow mice, a group which has caused widespread destruction in various parts of the world. In nearly all parts of the United States short-tailed field mice are among the most abundant of mammals, and a number of species in widely separated localities have occasionally exhibited the same tendency to excessive increase, indicating that favoring conditions may produce mouse plagues wherever the mice exist. Even when in small numbers they destroy considerable clover and alfalfa and injure orchards, nurseries and root crops.



Lombardy Poplar girdled and killed by field mice.

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This is the first recorded instance of an irruption of field mice in North America attaining the proportions of a plague. The experience indicates the probability of future and even more disastrous outbreaks. In the extensive reclaimed areas of the West the abundant food and luxurious cover furnished by the alfalfa fields and the miles of irrigation ditches which afford these mice suitable homes along their banks, greatly favor their increase, while surrounding desert conditions limit the spread of mice beyond the cultivated areas.

Without doubt poisoning is the best method at present known of dealing with field mice on an extensive scale. Besides effectiveness, poisons should possess the additional advantage of small cost and the least possible danger to man, to domestic stock, and to valuable wild birds and animals.

Poisons should always be prepared at a distance from the house where stock and poultry are not endangered. To avoid danger to

in which it is used should of persons strychnine and the vessels course be carefully handled and safely stored away when not in use.

In and about cultivated fields are many little areas where mice breed undisturbed. Waste strips along streams, swampy areas, and natural hay lands serve as breeding places from which cultivated fields are invaded. Poisoning is usually not practicable in such places. Burning off the rank grass and weeds is a great help in controlling field mice.

Very important in any attempt to control these mice is the keeping down of grass and other cover along ditches and about the borders of fields. Such cover affords mice protection from hawks, owls and other of their bird enemies.

Clean cultivation is the greatest safeguard to trees. Where rank grass, weeds, or cover crops are allowed to remain under the trees in winter, the attack of field mice is invited. Damage to orchards is usually done under cover of weeds and may reach serious proportions before being noticed. Many trees may be so badly injured that recovery is impossible, but most of them can usually be saved by promptly banking up earth about the trunks, entirely covering the wounded parts.

Dogs are worth many times their keep when trained to hunt mice. Fox terriers or other small breeds take readily to hunting them and during irrigation and plowing destroy great numbers. Many farmers in Nevada keep dogs for the purpose of killing ground squirrels, pocket gophers, and field mice as they are forced out of their burrows by water, and in this way keep the pests in check. Plows turn out of the burrows practically all the field mice present, so that they become easy victims for dogs. Dogs trained to follow plows very materially reduce the number of mice in the areas covered. As an inexpensive and effective help in controlling field mice, dogs can not be too highly recommended.

## GRAFT WALNUTS ON OAK TREES.

A genius, who grows walnuts on oak trees, has been found in Calaveras county, California, in the person of E. M. Price. Price has grafted walnut branches on the oak trees throughout the hills on his place and has met with remarkable success, as all the grafts have grown wonderfully. Price has been experimenting with walnut trees for years, and the walnuts he has grown on ordinary trees are three times the size of those sold in the market.

## KILLING THE GRASSHOPPER

By F. L. Washburn.

Concerted action by Government and State authorities has had the effect of changing the dreaded grasshopper from a menace which was national in scope, to an insect which while harmful enough in character, is not looked upon with the horror and fear it was comparatively a few years ago.

There are many methods of combating these pests, but three methods are especially practical in most localities.

Fall plowing is considered the most efficient. Plow the eggpods under, burying some, and breaking open others so that moisture can get in, and exposing still others to the attacks of their enemies,—birds, shrews, etc.

The second method is that of poisoned baits. Use either poisoned bran or the Criddle mixture. Poisoned bran can be used only in situations where stock and poultry are excluded. Neither should it be used where partridge and quail are likely to feed. It is merely bran poisoned with paris-green or arsenic, two pounds of paris-green to 100 of bran, moistened with water and a little molasses, so that the bran will just stick together when taken up with a spoon.

Criddle mixture is horse-manure mixed with arsenic and slightly salted. It is to be distributed about the fields in small masses. We all know of the fondness of grasshoppers for anything containing salt. They will even roughen fork handles in their efforts to get at the salt deposited on them with the perspiration. This mixture is recommended in some of the Western States. The proportions are about as follows: Paris-green, one pound; salt, two pounds; fresh horse-droppings, 100 pounds. The horse droppings are usually measured out in a three-gallon pail. Five pailfulls being taken as the right amount for one pound of the poison. The salt is dissolved in a pail of water, the poison stirred in, and the whole mixed with the droppings in a half barrel.

Scatter it about the fields well, in quantity according to number of grasshoppers. They will be attracted for 40 feet. It is most effective when fresh, but will do excellent work when several weeks old, even after being washed by rain.

The Criddle mixture, which was first introduced by Norman Criddle, has been so successful in Canada and many of our most northern States and is so much more effective than hopper-dozers, that

the use of these has been practically abandoned in some localities.

But if hopper-dozers are used, they can be used to best advantage when the day is warm and bright.

Sowing a strip of rye around the edge of a wheat field is claimed to be a simple way to keep grasshoppers at the edge of the field. The rye grows more rapidly than the wheat, and will stand a "eating down." This keeps the grasshoppers in a comparatively narrow area, where they can be easily handled.

Plowing a strip of land between a crop and an advancing army of quite young hoppers will sometimes turn their march and prevent loss.

To prevent crickets and grasshoppers from eating binder twine in the field: Soak balls of twine in solution of two pounds of bluestone; dissolve in 12 gallons of water, for half an hour and then dry thoroughly.

It must be remembered that it is hard to dissolve bluestone; it should, therefore, be placed in the water quite a long time before the liquid is to be used. A farmer suggests soaking balls of twine in kerosene. This might be effective.

## KEEP THE LAWN WELL ROLLED.

To make a good lawn the soil requires frequent rolling. In the first place a good lawn cannot be produced in one, two or three years—that is a perfect lawn, without depression and with a soil surface as smooth as a floor.

Ai lan roller can be made without much expense from cement using gas pipe for the axle and frame. The form for setting the cement may be of wood, using very narrow slabs or galvanized iron. In case the latter is used the form may be left on the roller, and if it is kept dry and protected from the weather it will last a long time.

A very handy size for a lawn roller is one about 20 inches long by 14 inches in diameter. If one has the proper tools which consist of a vice a thread-cutting tool, a roller can be made in a short time and at very little expense.

The good Book says, "In the morning sow thy seed and in the evening withhold not thy hand, for thou knowest not which shall prosper, whether this or that, or whether they shall be alike good." Seeds are like thoughts—sealed in everlasting secrecy until given an opportunity to express themselves. Like thoughts, they are unfruitful if unused.

Get your lambs started right. Attention now means a good lamb crop.